

Dream of a Nation- Moving Towards Action

The fourth and final lesson module is based on implementation and reflection. Up until now students have used *Dream of a Nation* and other sources to explore solution-based success models for critical issues facing our country and the world. The activities in this lesson module will have students monitoring the execution of the solutions created in lesson module three, as well as reflecting on solutions implemented in their everyday life. Students will also explore individuals who have created solutions that work.

1. Youth Visionary Profile

Up until now students have explored issues, solutions and organizations. This activity will allow them to dig a bit deeper and familiarize themselves with a youth visionary. Active citizens exist in every community, and it is active citizens who made *Dream of a Nation* possible and continue to work towards a better America. This activity allows the class to communicate with them.

2. Personal Action Plan

Using solutions explored in *Dream of a Nation* students will draft plans on how they will implement those solutions in their everyday lives. Through volunteering, being a conscious citizen, and making simple changes to their everyday lives students will start to understand the satisfaction of effecting change.

3. Solution Journal

This activity is contingent upon students having completed either the activities in lesson module 3 or the previous activity, “Personal Action Plan.” Once students have begun to implement their proposed solution from lesson module 3 or their Personal Action Plan, they will track their progress and effectiveness, as well as note any necessary changes in their daily solution journals.

4. Creating Awareness

Not everyone has the benefit of using *Dream of a Nation* in the classroom; this activity will challenge students to come up with ways to make the general population aware of critical issues and solutions to combat them.

5. What’s Your Dream?

This activity will allow students to reflect on their work with *Dream of a Nation*. After students have completed multiple activities within the Lesson Modules give them a chance to process, write, dream and create something meaningful to them and a cause they have embraced. And don’t forget to share your dream on dreamofanation.org.

The essays below are suggested pre-reading for three of the five final activities:

3. Visionary Profile	4. Creating Awareness	5. What’s Your Dream?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Citizens Shaping Their World (p. 64) •The Power of Young People to Change the World (p. 74) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Making Coverage Count (p. 128) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Closing: We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For (p. 408)

1. Youth Visionary Profile

Introduction

Students, up until now, have highlighted solutions, issues and organizations in different activities and projects. Now the class will have a chance to profile a youth visionary that is making changes in the community. Have the students use *Dream of a Nation* and media sources to search for youth citizens that are making a difference. The class will reach out to these visionaries to learn how they are effecting change and how to become more involved.

An essay titled “The Power of Young People to Change the World” by T.A. Barron is located on page 74 in *Dream of a Nation*. This essay highlights a number of young people who are creating change in their community and the world. Use this essay as inspiration for this activity as well as a starting point for discovering other youth leaders.

Procedure

Using newspapers, media sources and the Internet, have students search for a youth visionary they would like to communicate with and learn more about. Individual students, student groups or the whole class can choose to contact a youth visionary to learn more about him or her. Students should first become familiar with the individual through newspaper articles and the Internet. Students should attempt to answer the following questions before contacting the individual:

- What issues is the individual involved in?
- What solutions is the individual encouraging?
- Is the individual involved in an organization?
- What motivates this individual?

Once you’ve completed these questions move onto the second set of questions, which will help students reflect on their goals and what can motivate them to become leaders in their communities.

- Are you involved in creating change in your community?
- What inspires you to create change in the community?
- How can you continue to create change in your community?
- What are you personal and overall goals for creating change in the community?

Have students hold onto their answers and use them as inspiration for the final activity in this lesson module, “What’s Your Dream?”

Resources for Exploring Youth Leaders

<http://www.ashoka.org/youthventure>

<http://www.barronprize.org/>

<http://www.youthtoleaders.org/>

2. Personal Action Plan

Introduction

By now students have become very familiar with the multitude of solutions contained in *Dream of a Nation*. This activity works best if students have completed the Solution Hierarchies activity in Lesson Module II, have students refer to the lists created in that activity. Using those lists students will choose solutions to implement in their everyday lives and write essays outlining their plans for implementing those solutions. In the following activity students will start journals to track their commitment and progress.

Process

Start this activity by having students look over the lists created in the Solution Hierarchies activity in Lesson Module II. Have students trim their lists of “Solutions I Will Implement” down to 5 solutions they realistically plan implement in their everyday lives and what issues the solutions will help solve.

Solution	Issue
1. Make sure all lights are off when a room is empty	Cut down energy consumption
2. Instead of buying disposable water bottles get a reusable bottle	Reduce waste
3. Weatherize windows for winter	Reduce heating costs and loss of energy
4. Donate clothes that don't fit to a foundation that will put them to good use	Help less fortunate and recycle clothes instead of throwing them away
5. Replace incandescent light bulbs in my house with more efficient light sources	Reduce energy costs

Once students have created their lists have them construct essays explaining why and how they will implement these solutions, also have students set goals if the solution can be measured. Students will track their progress in journals in the next activity.

A Step Further

Have students choose a local organization to volunteer with weekly. Have students report back to the class and record their experiences in their Solution Journal.

3. Solution Journal

Introduction

This journal will help track students' progress as they begin to implement their solutions from Lesson Module III as well as their Personal Action Plan from the previous activity. Students should record their progress in notebooks just for this purpose. Students will write twice-weekly entries tracking their progress on the personal action plan, students that have completed Lesson Module III will make weekly entries concerning their solution from Lesson Module III.

Procedure

Have students make twice-weekly entries in their journals tracking progress on their Personal Action Plan and weekly entries tracking progress on their solution from Lesson Module III. Have students consider the following:

<u>Personal Solution Plan</u>	<u>Solution from Lesson Module III</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many solutions have I implemented today? • What's changed since my last entry? • Am I attaining the goals I set for myself? • What aspects of my Personal Action Plan am I not fulfilling? • What can I do better? • Should new goals be set? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is implementation of the solution going as planned? • What's changed since last week? • What is working? • What is not working? • What can I do better? • What changes need to be made? • Should new goals be set?

4. Creating Awareness

Introduction

Access to resources like *Dream of a Nation* are not available to everyone. A big reason a vast number of the school and general population doesn't integrate simple solutions into their everyday lives is simply because they do not know. Now that students are issue and solution masters, they should be ready to make their causes known. "Creating Awareness" challenges students to "get the word out" about simple actions that, if applied by the masses, can create big differences. This activity calls for students to pick a solution and create awareness around that solution through digital media, print or any other means.

Procedure

1. This activity works best with students in small groups of 3-4. Have each group pick a solution or cause to create awareness around; have the groups identify the solution and the issue the solution tackles.
2. Students will be focusing on two audiences to educate on their issue or solution: their direct local community (school) and the larger community (town, city, state, region, country).
3. Have students brainstorm a list of ideas on how they are going to create awareness around their cause for both their direct and large communities. Some example include:

Direct Community	Large Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Announcement • In-School Posters or Flyers • School Fundraisers • Tabling • Present to Other Classes and Administration • Ad-Space in School Newspaper or Publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Op-Eds in Local Newspapers • Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) • Public Service Announcement on Local Radio • Write a Member of Congress • Ad Space in Local Publications • Table in a High Foot Traffic Area

4. Once students have chosen a way to alert their school and the larger community of their cause, have them create their products and begin their awareness campaigns by starting with their direct communities before expanding to the larger community. Be sure to remind each group to keep track of how many people they reached.
5. Once each groups' campaign is initiated have them report back to the class on the effectiveness of their idea and how many people they made aware of their issue.

5. What's Your Dream?

Introduction

“What’s Your Dream” acts as a summation activity for the *Dream of a Nation* Lesson Modules, but this activity can be done anytime after the students have become familiar with the ideas, issues, and solutions in *Dream of a Nation*. This exercise will give students creative freedom to make products that are reflections of the mission and goals of the *Dream of a Nation* project. Reflecting, envisioning, quoting and creating will help to reinforce the power of the informed and engaged citizen and can inspire the future. So give students time to create something that is truly meaningful to both themselves and the cause, and don’t forget to upload your dream onto dreamofanation.org so it can be featured in the Blog or Media Center!

To start this activity have students read the essay titled, “We are the One We Have Been Waiting For...” by Alice Walker on page 408 of *Dream of a Nation*. Once students have read the essay have them reflect on their experience with *Dream of a Nation* by creating products from the list of ideas below. When students are finished allow them time to share their dreams or creations with the class.

Ideas

- Write a Poem
- Create an Art Piece
- Film a Short Documentary
- Write an Essay
- Start a Blog
- Create a Comic Strip
- Write a letter to yourself in 30 years? Did you make changes to your personal life to affect how you are living in the future?

Refer to dreamofanation.org’s list of Youth Organizations to learn how your students can become involved with other people their age to create change in the world.